BOOM! STUDIOS™

JAMES TYNION IV

WERTHER DELL'EDERA

MIQUEL MUERTO

Nº 14

SOMETHING is KILLING the CHILDREN™

WHAT IS IT...?
IT'S ERICA'S MONSTER.

I DON'T LIKE IT.
THAT'S OKAY. I DON'T LIKE IT EITHER.

WHY DOES IT LOOK LIKE THAT?
THAT'S A GOOD QUESTION. IT DIDN'T USE TO.
THE PEOPLE AT THE HOUSE OF SLAUGHTER TAUGHT ME HOW TO TAME IT. TAMING IT GAVE IT A NEW SHAPE.

IT'S SCARY.

SOME OF THE OTHER KIDS IN THE ORDER, THEY MADE THEIR MONSTERS LOOK ***PRETTY.*** BUT I DIDN'T WANT TO FORGET WHAT IT WAS, AND WHAT IT DID TO ME.

WHAT DID IT DO?

IT KILLED MY PARENTS, AND MY FRIEND.

OH.

I'M SORRY.

ME TOO.

IS IT STILL ***DANGEROUS?***

YES.

NOT TO ***YOU.*** JUST TO ME.

ERICA...

I NEED YOU TO SIT ON EITHER SIDE OF HIM. LAY DOWN, AND CLOSE YOUR EYES.

WE CALL THIS THE ***GAME OF NOWHERE.*** WE LEARN TO PLAY IT EARLY AT THE HOUSE OF SLAUGHTER.

IT'S A GAME OF ***IMAGINATION.*** I'M GOING TO NEED YOU BOTH TO LISTEN CLOSELY TO MY VOICE.

I'M GOING TO ASK YOU TO PICTURE SOME THINGS IN YOUR MIND, AND I'M GOING TO NEED YOU TO ***KEEP*** PICTURING THEM, NO MATTER HOW SCARED YOU GET.

YEAH. OKAY.

I WANT YOU TO START BY IMAGINING THAT YOU'RE IN A VOID. A BIG, EMPTY WHITE SPACE.

YOU'RE LAYING DOWN IN THAT WHITE LIKE YOU ARE HERE IN THE LIVING ROOM.

YOU'RE NOT TOO WARM. YOU'RE NOT TOO COLD. YOU'RE COMFORTABLE.

YOU CAN FEEL YOURSELF BREATHING IN AND OUT.

AND AS YOU BREATHE, THE WHITENESS BREATHES TOO...

AS YOU BREATHE IN, THE WHITE STARTS TO DARKEN TO BLACK, AND AS YOU BREATHE OUT, THE BLACK TURNS BACK TO WHITE.

BREATHE IN...

BREATHE OUT.

BREATHE IN...

BREATHE OUT.

BREATHE IN...

BREATHE OUT.

BIAN, I WANT YOU TO KEEP BREATHING WHILE I TALK TO JAMES, OKAY? KEEP PICTURING THE BLACK AND WHITE AS YOU BREATHE.

OKAY.

JAMES.

BACK AT THE BEGINNING, YOU TOLD YOUR FRIEND TYLER ABOUT THE MONSTER...BUT HAD YOU *IMAGINED* IT BEFORE?

I...UH... YEAH.

I WANT YOU TO REMEMBER THAT MOMENT, EXACTLY.

THE FAMILY COMPUTER WAS IN THE LIVING ROOM, RIGHT NEXT TO A WINDOW TO THE BACKYARD. I USED TO SNEAK DOWN WHEN EVERYONE WAS ASLEEP, SO I COULD CHAT WITH MY FRIENDS.

I'D KEEP THE ROOM DARK, SO IT WAS JUST ME AND THE LIGHT FROM THE COMPUTER...WHICH WAS BRIGHT ENOUGH THAT I COULDN'T SEE OUT THE WINDOW NEXT TO ME.

AND I STARTED IMAGINING, WHAT IF I TURNED OFF THE SCREEN, AND THERE WAS A BIG FACE RIGHT IN THE WINDOW? WITH LONG NAILS SCRAPING AGAINST THE GLASS, AND LONG, WHITE TEETH.

I GOT SO SCARED THINKING ABOUT IT, I STAYED UP THAT NIGHT UNTIL...TWO IN THE MORNING. AND WHEN I LEFT THE ROOM, I SHUT MY EYES AND RAN.

AND YOU TOLD TYLER...

I SLEPT OVER AT HIS HOUSE THE NEXT NIGHT. AND I TOLD HIM THE STORY, BUT IT WASN'T THE REAL STORY.

I TOLD HIM THAT I HEARD SOMETHING, AND TURNED THE COMPUTER LIGHTS OFF. THAT I SAW IT.

WE SPENT THE REST OF THE NIGHT DARING EACH OTHER TO TURN OUT THE LIGHTS AND LOOK AT THE WOODS.

I WANT YOU TO ***HOLD*** THAT IMAGE IN YOUR HEAD. THE MONSTER YOU WERE AFRAID TO SEE. THE ***MONSTER*** YOU DESCRIBED.

CARVE IT IN YOUR ***MIND*** OUT OF THE BLACK AND WHITE, AND HOLD IT THERE.

OKAY.

DON'T LOSE YOUR ***FOCUS.*** KEEP PICTURING IT. LET THE IMAGE GET ***SHARPER*** IN YOUR MIND.

NO NO NO NO NO...

IT'S *OKAY,* BIAN. CLOSE YOUR EYES.

IT'S NOT OKAY.

IT'S THE *MAMA.* THE MAMA WASN'T NICE LIKE THE BABIES. IT WAS *MEAN.*

I'M NOT GOING TO LET IT HURT YOU. DO YOU BELIEVE ME?

...YEAH.

WHEN TYLER TOLD YOU ABOUT THE MONSTER. COULD YOU PICTURE IT IN YOUR HEAD?

Y-YEAH.

I WANT YOU TO REMEMBER HOW YOU *IMAGINED* IT. WHAT YOU PICTURED WHEN HE DESCRIBED THE MONSTER IN THE *RAVINE.*

WHAT DID YOU SEE IN YOUR *HEAD* EVERY TIME YOU THOUGHT OF IT AND GOT SCARED?

I SAW...

...THAT.

BANG

BANG

BANG

OKAY, I KNOW YOU ALL ***HEARD*** ME. NOW I WANT YOU TO ACT LIKE IT. MOVE TO THE ***CENTER*** OF THE GYM.

I'M GOING TO HAVE YOU EACH TURN OUT YOUR POCKETS, AND ***EMPTY*** YOUR PURSES AND BAGS. WE'RE TAKING ALL YOUR PHONES, CAMERAS, ***ANYTHING*** LIKE THAT.

THEN WE CAN FIGURE OUT WHAT WE'RE GOING TO DO WITH ALL OF YOU.

YOU'RE IN CHARGE HERE?

YEAH. I'M IN CHARGE.

I'VE DONE ***EVERYTHING*** YOUR FRIENDS IN THE MASKS TOLD ME TO DO. I DON'T WANT YOU ***TREATING*** THESE PEOPLE LIKE THIS.

THE ***OTHER*** PEOPLE IN MASKS AREN'T MY FRIENDS. WE'RE THE ONES WHO GOT CALLED IN TO PICK UP ***THEIR*** MESS.

YOU ARE THEIR ***MESS.*** WE'RE HERE TO PICK YOU UP.

NOW, ***EMPTY*** YOUR POCKETS.

I AM THE ***SHERIFF*** OF THIS TOWN.

AND I AM GOING TO ***BURY*** THIS AXE INTO YOUR NECK IF YOU DON'T DO WHAT I ***TELL*** YOU TO DO.

I'M SORRY, MOM...I'M SORRY I COULDN'T GET YOU OUT OF HERE. I DIDN'T...

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

IT'S HER.

OH.

MAHONEY SOPHIE

SOPHIE...

I'M SO *SORRY,* SWEETIE. I WISH I COULD TRADE PLACES WITH YOU RIGHT NOW. I WISH YOU COULD HAVE THE *LIFE* YOU DESERVED.

YOU *DEAF* OR SOMETHING?

THAT'S MY *SISTER.* HER DAUGHTER.

SHE CAME HERE TO SAY *GOODBYE.* SHE'S SAYING GOODBYE.

GIVE ME YOUR PHONES.

THERE.

WHAT ABOUT HER?

SHE'S *NOT* CALLING ANYBODY.

YOU HAVE *TWO MINUTES* TO SAY GOODBYE, THEN YOU GET WITH THE REST OF THE PEOPLE. GOT IT?

YEAH. GOT IT.

FUCK. FUCK FUCK FUCK.

IT'S OKAY. IT'S STILL JUST OCTO. YOU SHAPED HIM INTO A ***COPY*** OF THE MOTHER MONSTER.

IT KILLED MY ***FRIENDS!*** IT KILLED THEM RIGHT ***IN FRONT*** OF ME!

I KNOW. AND WE'RE GOING TO ***STOP*** THAT FROM HAPPENING TO ANYONE ELSE. HERE. TONIGHT.

JAMES, I NEED YOU TO WATCH BIAN.

OKAY.

DON'T LET HER GO. DON'T LET HER GET HURT.

YEAH.

IT'S SO LOUD.

IT HAS TO BE, OTHERWISE THEY WON'T HEAR THEIR MOTHER CALLING FOR THEM.
DON'T WATCH.

MOM.

COME ON, WE HAVE TO GO.

ARE THEY GOING TO *KILL* US?

I DON'T KNOW.

IF THEY'RE JUST GOING TO KILL US, THEY CAN COME TO ME. I'M *DONE,* TOMMY. I'M JUST DONE.

MOM.

I'M NOT *STRONG* ENOUGH FOR THIS. NOBODY SHOULD HAVE TO BE STRONG ENOUGH FOR THIS.

SHE WAS SO *GOOD,* AND THIS IS ALL THAT'S LEFT OF HER... BONES AND MEAT.

I'M *SORRY* I COULDN'T KEEP HER SAFE, BUT I AM GOING TO SAVE YOU, OKAY? I AM *NOT* GOING TO LET YOU DIE.

I DON'T CARE...

I CARE. I STILL FUCKING ***CARE.*** I'M STILL YOUR SON AND I ***CARE*** SO FUCKING MUCH.

TOMMY...

I'M SORRY, MOM. I'M SORRY I COULDN'T ***PROTECT*** HER. I'M SORRY I'M NOT BETTER.

BUT I HAVE AN ***IDEA***...AN IDEA THAT MIGHT GET YOU OUT OF HERE, AND ***SOPHIE*** INTO A PROPER GRAVE.

TOMMY...I DON'T HAVE TIME FOR YOU...

THESE PEOPLE...THEY'RE HERE FOR *CLEANUP.* TO MAKE SURE NOBODY SPREADS THE STORY OF A *MONSTER* IN THAT PARKING LOT.

WHAT DO YOU *SUGGEST* WE DO?

GIVE THEM A BETTER STORY.

THEY'RE COMING.

I KNOW. I CAN *FEEL* THEIR EYES ON ME.

THEY'RE GOING TO KILL YOU.

SHUT UP, AND GET BACK INTO YOUR OCTOPUS.

I NEED TO WORK OFF SOME ANGER.

ZOK

CRACK

WUK

WAIT
WEAPONS

RIIIPPP

YOU WANT ME TO DO *WHAT?*

YOU HAVE TO *ARREST* ME RIGHT NOW.

WHAT?!

I *CONFESS.* I KILLED ALL OF THEM. EVERY ONE OF THOSE KIDS.

AND I COULDN'T *HELP* MYSELF, SO EVEN WHEN YOU FOUND WHERE I STASHED THE BODIES, I STARTED *KILLING* AGAIN IN THE WOODS.

JESUS, KID.

AND THEN I KILLED A *LITTLE GIRL,* IN THE PARKING LOT, IN FRONT OF *EVERYBODY.* AND ALL THOSE PEOPLE SAW IT.

DO YOU *GET* WHAT I'M SAYING, SHERIFF?

BECAUSE IF ALL THOSE PEOPLE *SAW* ME DO IT, THEN THERE'S *NOTHING* THAT NEEDS TO BE COVERED UP.

ISN'T THAT RIGHT?!

YOU ALL SAW ME KILL THAT GIRL, RIGHT? YOU JUST SAW ME DO IT.

AND THEN THE SHERIFF ***ARRESTED*** ME IN FRONT OF ALL OF YOU, AND THAT WAS THE ***END*** OF IT. THE END OF ALL THE KILLING.

YOU'RE ***CRAZY.***

THAT'S RIGHT. I'M ***FUCKING CRAZY.*** THAT'S WHY I KILLED ALL THOSE KIDS! THAT'S WHY I ***NEED*** TO BE LOCKED UP.

THIS ***ISN'T*** GOING TO WORK, KID. THE MONSTERS ARE STILL ***OUT THERE.*** THEY KILL AGAIN...

THERE'S A ***CLEANER*** WAY TO END ALL OF THIS.

SOMETHING is KILLING the CHILDREN™

"A GAME OF NOWHERE"
PART FOUR

WRITTEN BY
JAMES TYNION IV

ILLUSTRATED BY
WERTHER DELL'EDERA

COLORED BY
MIQUEL MUERTO

LETTERED BY
ANDWORLD DESIGN

COVER BY
WERTHER DELL'EDERA
WITH COLORS BY MIQUEL MUERTO

VARIANT COVER BY
MIRKA ANDOLFO

SCOTT'S COLLECTIBLES EXCLUSIVE VARIANT COVERS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH JAMES TYNION IV BY
PEACH MOMOKO

BLACK CAPE COMICS EXCLUSIVE VARIANT COVER BY
ZU ORZU

ECGCE & IZZY'S COMICS AND COLLECTIBLES EXCLUSIVE VARIANT COVER BY
QISTINA KHALIDAH

THE COMIC MINT EXCLUSIVE VARIANT COVER BY
EJIKURE

COMIC HERO UNIVERSITY EXCLUSIVE VARIANT COVER BY
MIRKA ANDOLFO

DESIGNER
MICHELLE ANKLEY

ASSISTANT EDITOR
GWEN WALLER

EDITOR
ERIC HARBURN

SOMETHING IS KILLING THE CHILDREN CREATED BY JAMES TYNION IV & WERTHER DELL'EDERA

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SON OF ULTRON

"THIS FAN... THIS MONSTER!"